

REMARKS

The Office Action dated September 20, 2004, has been reviewed and the Examiners comments carefully considered. Claim 26 is canceled, and claims 25, 28, 29, 31 and 36 are amended. Thus, claims 25 and 27-38 are pending and submitted for reconsideration.

Claim 25 is objected to and claim 36 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 for various informalities. The claims have been amended where appropriate. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 25 and 30 are rejected as anticipated by Fig. 5 (labeled "Prior Art") of the present application. The rejection should be withdrawn because Fig. 5 fails to disclose, teach or suggest the claimed invention. For example, Fig. 5 fails to disclose, teach or suggest a seat belt including "stitching to maintain the shape of the folded portion" as called for in claim 25. The Office Action refers to stitching 126 shown in Fig. 5. However, the stitching 126 merely serves to form the loop portion of the webbing and does not "maintain the shape of the folded portion." Further by way of example, Fig. 5 fails to disclose, teach or suggest "webbing located in the opening [that] is folded and constrained from unfolding by stitching extending in a direction transverse to the longitudinal direction of the webbing" as called for in claim 30. As shown in Fig. 5, the webbing located in the opening 114 is folded. However, Fig. 5 fails to disclose any stitching restraining the webbing. Thus, the rejection should be withdrawn. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 25 and 30 is respectfully requested.

Claims 25 and 27-30 are rejected as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,301,977 (Stojanovski). The rejection should be withdrawn because Stojanovski fails to disclose, teach or suggest the claimed invention. For example, Stojanovski fails to disclose stitching to "maintain the shape of the folded portion" as called for in claim 25. Stojanovski discloses stitching 56. However, stitching 56 merely forms the belt loop and does not maintain the shape of the folded portion. (See Stojanovski at col. 3, lines 59-62). Thus, the rejection of claim 25 should be withdrawn. Furthermore, with regard to claim 30, Stojanovski fails to disclose, teach or suggest "webbing located in the opening [that] is folded and constrained from unfolding by stitching extending in a direction transverse to the longitudinal direction of

the webbing” as called for in claim 30. As shown in Fig. 7 of Stojanovski, the webbing located in the opening 40 is folded. However, Fig. 7 fails to disclose any stitching restraining the folded webbing. Thus, the rejection of claim 30 should be withdrawn. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 25 and 30 is respectfully requested.

Claims 27-29 depend from claim 25, and are allowable therewith, for at least the reasons set forth above, without regard to the further patentable limitations contained therein.

Claim 30 is also rejected as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,336,371. The rejection should be withdrawn because O’Boyle fails to disclose, teach or suggest the claimed invention. For example, O’Boyle fails to disclose, teach or suggest “webbing located in the opening [that] is folded and constrained from unfolding by stitching extending in a direction transverse to the longitudinal direction of the webbing” as called for in claim 30. As shown in Fig. 1 of O’Boyle, the webbing located in the opening 26 is not folded. Thus, the rejection of claim 30 should be withdrawn. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 25 and 30 is respectfully requested.

Claims 31-34 are rejected as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,891,272 (Takada). The rejection should be withdrawn because Takada fails to disclose teach or suggest the claimed invention. For example, Takada fails to disclose “a transition portion that fans out from the folded portion to join the unfolded portion of the seat belt” as called for in claim 31. The Examiner contends that Takada discloses a unfolded portion 34 and a transition portion located below the folded section. However, the “unfolded portion” designated by the Examiner is located in the looped portion formed by stitching 39 and is not “adjacent to the looped portion” as called for in claim 31. Thus, the alleged transition portion shown in Fig. 4 of Takada does not “join the unfolded portion of the seat belt” as called for in claim 31. Accordingly, the rejection should be withdrawn. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 32-38 depend from claim 31 and are allowable therewith, for at least the reasons set forth above, without regard to the further patentable limitations contained therein. With regard to claims 35-38 the Examiner contends that it would have been obvious to

modify Takada to include a tension sensor as taught by Stojanovski. However, Stojanovski teaches the incorporation of the tension sensor into the belt hardware, such as the belt tongue 21 shown in Takada. Thus, even if Takada were modified to include a tension sensor, the webbing 34 disclosed by Takada and relied upon by the Examiner would remain connected to the webbing 36 and would not be connected tension sensor as called for in claims 35-38. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 35-38 is respectfully requested.

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

Date

12/28/04

By



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